

Stamp News Publishing Market Report:

Stamp Market Tips: The “I” Grills

by John F. Dunn

On the facing page we present a page from our Reference Manual section for the United States Grills, with an Addendum to incorporate the new, major listing of the “I” Grills.

In reading the Burns article in the 2013 *Specialized*, which was referenced in the Scott announcement and our Addendum, it is clear that valuation was an important motivator in finally creating these new major numbers. The “I”s had been recognized as separate grill patterns from the “H”s going back for decades. Then the auction houses in particular began to properly describe them as being scarcer and as they were realizing considerably higher prices, it became imperative that Scott recognize them for what they are and alert collectors to their considerably higher values.

The reason I offer this as a “Tip” is because we have seen this before. In the 2003 *Specialized*, Scott sorted out the Washington-Franklin Compound Perforations as major numbers and here is what happened:

Scott #	2002 (minor #)	2003 major	2004	2013
423A mint	2,750 (424a)	4,500	7,500	15,000
423A used	3,000 (424a)	4,000	5,000	7,500
423B mint	10,000 (425d)	25,000	30,000	175,000
423B used	4,500 (425d)	5,000	10,000	25,000
423C mint	-- (428a)	--	--	--
423C used	7,000 (428a)	7,000	12,500	27,500
423D mint	-- (424b)	--	--	--
423D used	3,000 (424b)	4,500	7,500	15,000
423E mint	-- (425c)	--	--	--
423E used	-- (425c)	--	--	--

To summarize, when Scott majored the Compound perfs, they significantly raised values for most of them in the 2003 book. A year later, as auction realizations came in for the new majors, the values were boosted even more—and by now most are up by multiples of the 2003 and 2004 values.

So...I have no reason to believe that something similar will not hold true for the “I” Grills. In this case we do not have former minor listings to start from; rather the prices for the “H” and “I”s were lumped together, so the growth in the “I”s may be even greater. Here are the comparisons between 2012 (H and I lumped together) and 2013 with the Is separated as new major numbers. (Interestingly, Scott did not change the prices for what is now only the H listings, Sc. 234-244.)

2012 Sc. #	2013 #	Mint 2012	Mint 2013	Used 2012	used 2103
134	134A	2,000	2,750	210	275
135	135A	1,000	1,750	80	225
136	136A	575	1,000	32.50	95
137	137A	5,000	7,000	575	900
138	138A	4,250	6,750	550	1,500
139	139A	7,000	--	850	6,000
140	140A	27,500	35,000	3,750	--
141	141A	7,500	17,500	1,400	7,500
142	---	--	not listed	7,500	not listed
143	143A	20,000	75,000	4,000	--
144	144A	25,000	--	--	15,000

You may not be able to go after the highest value “I” Grills, and that is where the most appreciation most likely will take place, but we may well see some significant gains in the lower priced items. If nothing else, if you collect this area, you will want to acquire any that you can afford as quickly as possible.

Do not, however, assume that you just pay ANY price. Here’s why:

This 7¢ “I” grill, Sc. 138A, sold for \$4,250 in the recent Siegel Auction Galleries sale of the Nick Kirke Collection of Gem-Quality Used U.S. Stamps, but the same stamp fetched \$8,500 in December 2010 Auction #1000. (In the Kirke Auction Catalogue, the Scott listings of “I” Grills was noted, but the value used were the 2012 values, before Scott provided their 2013 prices, so bidders would not have been aware that the value had gone from \$550 in 2012 to \$1,500 in the 2013 book.

I don’t have any lesser value examples to offer from this Gem sale, but despite the experience with this Gem-Quality stamp (PSE Grade Superb 98, the highest for any 7¢ “H” or “I” Grill) you can expect most realizations—and subsequent Scott prices—to be moving up, rather than down.

One vital word of caution: the Grills in general are tough to identify, and they also are subject to faking, so you will want to be sure they are genuine, and supported by an expertizing certificate.

